



**CLANNAD**  
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**ATLANTIC RECORDS PRESS RELEASE**

From the start, the story of Clannad has intertwined the traditional and the modern, the past and the future, with graceful, powerful, and moving results. On their latest Atlantic Album, "Lore" the Irish quartet journeys back to the most fundamental aspects of their internationally heralded sound, to the sources that first inspired them over twenty years ago. At the same time, as with everything Clannad has done, the album reflects their continuing commitment to change, marking yet another step forward in the artistic evolution of this most unique ensemble.

Produced by Hugh Padgham (Genesis, Phil Collins, Police), Ciarán Brennan, and Dennis Woods, "Lore" features eleven new Clannad songs -

five penned by Ciarán, three by Máire Brennan, one by Noel Duggan, and two traditional tunes arranged by Ciarán. Among the guest musicians on the album is younger Brennan sibling Bridin, who contributes backing vocals. The group's first new studio album since 1993's acclaimed "Banba", it follows last years release of Máire's second solo album, "Misty Eyed Adventures", 1995 also saw the release of "Clannad Themes", a compilation of the group's film and TV work, which was assembled specially for the launch of the new Dublin-based Celtic Heartbeat label (distributed by Atlantic).

Taking their name from the Gaelic language of their native Donegal - an abbreviation of "an clann as Dobhar", meaning "a family from the townland of Dore"- Máire and Ciarán Brennan and their uncles Noel and Pádraig Duggan have woven a unique and timeless sound from the various strands of music which surrounded them as they grew up in the remote coastal region of Gweedore.

In their earliest days, the members of Clannad were - like typical teenagers - influenced most immediately by the pop charts. They would master Beach Boys, Stones, and Joni Mitchell covers, which they'd perform at local dances. They soon graduated to playing at the bar run by the Brennans' father Leo, himself a former cabaret band leader. The influence of Leo's wife Baba, a schoolteacher who ran the local choir, provided an ideal counterbalance. Soon, the group were attuned to so many different styles of music that they were able to hear the potential in sounds few others appreciated - the folk music of their own homeland.

*"Donegal isn't called "The Forgotten County" for nothing", Ciarán explains. "It's so remote to the rest of Ireland that it could be Russia as far as many people are concerned, and so it's legacy of traditional songs wasn't as well appreciated as those of, say Kerry and Galway. Contributing to the lack of awareness was the fact that these songs had never been arranged properly. A lot of local people were convinced that their own music was somehow uninteresting. We saw the beauty of it".*

Once their interest in the sounds of Donegal was whetted, the young Brennans and Duggans collected as many examples of local traditional songs as they could by persuading old and young alike to do a turn on stage in Leo's bar. Regulars from across the locale would sing their personal repertoire into a tape recorder and offer any background history they

could on particular songs. To add further to their archive, they even visited such outlying communities as Tory island off the coast of Donegal, where only some hundred people now live. Soon they had more than 500 Gaelic songs at their disposal, and they set about giving simple arrangements to even the most obscure ones.

Ciarán's skill at bringing a contemporary sensibility to this material stemmed from his own increasing sensitivity to the cultural heritage all around him. He credits Donegal's MacGrianna family from Rannafast, writers and poets from the '40s and '50s , and various writers from Gweedore with opening him up to this rich historical and cultural legacy. *“When people ask me to define the Clannad sound, I always say that if they were to visit Donegal, they wouldn't need to ask”*, says Ciarán.

Clannad's musical promise was confirmed when, in 1970, they entered and won the local Letterkenney Folk Festival - first prize being a recording contract with the Irish arm of Philips. Borrowing money for a P.A. system and a van, the group threw themselves into touring, sometimes playing as many as three times a day - at colleges, convents, or anywhere there was a willing audience. The line-up at that time comprised Máire on lead vocals and Irish harp, with Ciarán on double bass and vocals, brother Pól (who left the band in 1989 to work on a number of projects, including WOMAD) on tin whistles, flute, and vocals, and twins Noel and Padraig on guitar and mandolin/harmonica, respectively.

During the '70s, Clannad recorded six traditional albums, each of which helped to shape and refine the band's now unmistakable sound. Soon, their touring schedules began to spread to mainland Europe. A standing ovation in Berlin in 1976 persuaded them to turn professional. In 1980, Enya Brennan joined the band, singing and playing keyboards on “Crann Úll”, and “Fuaim”, before leaving to pursue her own highly successful solo career.

Clannad's big break came in 1982 when Yorkshire television asked the band to write an original theme for a three-part adaption of a fictional Northern-Ireland-based thriller by Gerald Seymour. In doing so, he company was instrumental in helping the band towards an achievement they are still immensely proud of - the legitimising of their native language as a medium for pop music lyrics, throughout Ireland and around the world. In the process, the group ended up making history. The million-selling “The

Theme From Harry's Game”, with the first Gaelic lyric ever to chart in Britain, hit the top five and won the band a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award nomination and an Ivor Novello award in the best television soundtrack category.

The song's timeless appeal was further illustrated a decade later by its inclusion in the film “Patriot Games” and its selection as the theme for a nationwide Volkswagen advertising campaign. Clannad's debut Atlantic album, “Anam”, was released in the U.S. in 1992 and became by far the group's most successful American release to date - spurred on by an overwhelming reaction to “Harry's Game”, including extensive video exposure on VH-1. The song went on to garner the Billboard Music Award for “World Music Song Of The Year”.

Clannad's Grammy-nominated 1993 album, “Banba”, which took the group to #1 on the nation's World Music chart, garnered considerable radio airplay with “I Will Find You: The Love Theme From Last Of The Mohicans” (the track was also included on the movie soundtrack). Coinciding with the release of “Banba”, Clannad embarked on their first U.S. tour in five years, a series of concerts which won critical raves and audience ovations across the country.

The release of “Lore”, will kick off a very busy year for Clannad, including on eagerly anticipated 1996 world tour - which is slated to include an extensive American itinerary, their first U.S. concerts in three years. Until then, take an opportunity to bask in the beauty and artistry of “Lore” - centuries in the making, immediate in impact.

**From the unofficial Clannad website: [www.clannad.org.uk](http://www.clannad.org.uk)**

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